

Kimball Academy
Kimball, Bosque County, Texas

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
San Francisco, California

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KIMBALL ACADEMY

Kimball, Bosque County, Texas

ADDRESS: Kimball, Texas (State Highway 174)

OWNER: Charles McCullough, C/of Mrs. Lee McCullough
Box 116, Morgan, Texas

OCCUPANT: Abandoned ruin

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The village of Kimball was founded by a New York lawyer named Richard Kimball and an enterprising ex-newspaper man from Jamaica, Jacob de Cordova, in 1854. The site selected for the settlement was the fertile 'ox-bow' bend of the Brazos, the bend now known as Kimball Bend. This was the only shallow crossing free of quicksand possible for miles up and miles down the river.

There were rudimentary forms of education in the neighborhood from its very beginning. The very earliest types were built of logs, these being replaced with stone when it was found that recalcitrant scholars sometimes burned them to the ground. These schools consisted of one room only, and they served only the most basic of elementary grades. Private schools were needed to teach beyond these levels. In addition, such schools served to train the very necessary teacher for the lower levels. Along with its educational potential, the private school established a unique form of architectural expressionism for several decades on the frontier.

In 1872, it was decided that Kimball was ready for higher education. The Kimball Academy Building Association was formed, consisting of B. F. Duval, W. E. Spalding, M. D., A. Willingham, I. Y. Willingham, W. L. Bateman, H. M. de Cordova, and Richard Kimball. It is probable that the structure had no architect, and it is very probable that a master mason was responsible for its design and construction. Local limestone, quarried nearby, was set with the greatest precision to form the walls. The building was readied for its first classes during the fall of 1873. On the strength of such educational possibility, many ranchers from outlying districts established winter residency in the village so that their offspring could enjoy the benefits of higher education.

Almost simultaneous with the construction of the academy, an economic development occurred in Texas which brought the village of Kimball into significance. This was the establishment of the Chisholm Trail, a cattle route from the grazing areas of south Texas to the rail heads of Wichita, Kansas. Though several variations of the route called 'Chisholm Trail' might exist within a given territory, there were points of convergence---especially at difficult river crossings. One of these crossings was at the shallow ford at Kimball. During the first ten years of its existence, hundreds of thousands of longhorn cattle passed by the academy; and frequently, the school would be engulfed in a sea of longhorns. During these times, some of the scholars would joyfully maroon themselves from classes in the branches of adjacent live oaks while the semi-wild cattle hurried beneath.

In 1882, the railroads began to move the cattle, and the trail herds soon were history. In addition, public education in Texas on higher levels was beginning to bring about the decline of the private academy. The academy at Kimball flourished into the early decades of the twentieth century, but adjacent, more prosperous communities with schools of their own soon eliminated the need for the academy at Kimball.

The structure is presently a ruin. Its condition seems to be the result of having been mined for materials over a long period of time, rather than a result of fire or other demolition. Inquiries in the neighborhood gave no clues as to the reason for its ruinous state.

The property is presently owned by Charles McCullough, and the site is fenced for grazing purposes.

REFERENCES AND SOURCES:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Cureton, H. J. and C. M. | <u>Sketch of Early History of Bosque Co.</u>
Tribune Printing Company. Meridian,
Texas. 1904 (?) |
| Frazier, Mrs. Frank | P. O. Box 8, Morgan, Texas
Personal interview |
| George, W. Eugene, Jr. | "The Village of Kimball." <u>The</u>
<u>Texas Architect</u> . Volume 11.
Number 5. July, 1960. Pages 4-6. |

McCullough, Mrs. R. Earl (Isabell C.)	1602 West Lovers Lane Arlington, Texas
McCullough, Mrs. Lee	Box 116, Morgan, Texas (has old interior photograph c. 1908)
Nichols, Edwin Seymour	<u>Ed Nichols Rode a Horse</u> Texas Folklore Society and University Press. Dallas, 1943.
Pool, William Clayton	<u>Bosque County, Texas</u> San Marcos Record Press San Marcos, Texas. 1954.
Powell, Mrs. S. O.	715 S. Prairieville, Athens, Texas
Rogers, A. E.	Morgan, Texas

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. Architectural interest and merit: This building might truly be classified as anonymous architecture, it being primarily an expression of the frontier constructed to suit particular needs of the educational demands of the times. Victorian influences are very slightly acknowledged by the shallow exterior arches above the windows. The condition of the fabric is poor, and the ruins appear subject to further demolition.
- B. Technical description of the exterior.
1. Overall dimensions: 35' by 60'
 2. Foundations: Limestone, coursed rubble continuous.
 3. Wall construction: Coursed, slightly squared rubble limestone
 4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: None extant.
 5. Chimneys: none

6. Openings: Doorways and doors. None extant. ^eHights imply glass transoms might have been employed. Windows and shutters. Double hung wood with shallow arched heads exterior and wood lintels interior. Stone sills. None extant. No evidence of shutters.
7. Roof: Unknown. Probably hipped with wood shingles.

B. Technical description of interior:

1. Floor Plans: Simple, one room rectangle.
2. Stairway: None
3. Flooring: Earth, probably covered with stone flagging (removed).
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Exposed stone interior walls, ceiling unknown.
5. Doorways and doors: Unknown.
6. Trim; Unknown.
7. Hardware: Unknown.
8. Lighting: Unknown.
9. Heating: Unknown. No chimneys or evidence of chimneys. Probably employed cast iron stoves with metal pipes through roof.

C. Site:

1. Orientation: Long axis of building runs east-west, with principal entrances on east.
2. Enclosures: None extant. References mention longhorn cattle came to windows during trail drives.
3. Outbuildings: None extant. There probably were privies and pony sheds.

4. Walks, etc.: None extant.
5. Landscaping, gardens, etc.: None extant. Reference mentions large live oaks immediately adjacent to building.

Prepared by W. Eugene George, Jr. November 30, 1961
W. Eugene George, Jr.

Approved Charles S. Pope Date January 9, 1962
Architect, Historic Structures, WODC - NPS